

# ALTERNATIVES IN MOTION

**The Mission:** Provide wheelchairs to individuals who do not qualify for other assistance, and who could not obtain such equipment without financial aid.



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A Wish Come True...Pg. 1
- Charity of the Year...Pg. 1
- A Note From Carol...Pg. 2
- A Prayer Answered...Pg. 2
- Special Events Update...Pg. 3
- Request For Equipment...Pg. 4
- Volunteer Opportunities...Pg. 4
- Board of Directors...Pg. 4

## *A Wish Come True*

Through the generosity of one local family, Oksana Parmenter celebrated her birthday with smiles and cheers as she was presented with a brand new sports wheelchair from Alternatives in Motion.

Oksana, who attends Sand Lake Elementary school and was adopted 18-months ago from Lithuania, was born with Spina Bifida and is paralyzed from the waist down. She has adjusted quickly to life in America and says she loves sports and eating thin crust pizza. "When she was living in Lithuania she was told that she would never be able to play sports because of her handicap," said Oksana's mother Jan.

Jan and her husband Bill taught their daughter how to throw and catch a ball. They introduced Oksana to the Jr. Pacers, a local wheelchair basketball team, where she was able to borrow a chair to learn the game. With other medical costs, the family couldn't afford to buy Oksana the specialized sports chair she needed. Through a co-worker Jan posted a wish in the Grand Rapids Press Wish List in hopes that someone would help buy the chair for their daughter. That someone was local businessman Philip Streng and his family. "Each year we look at the wish list as a family and decide on what causes we want to help, when we saw the wheelchair request we knew we could make a difference," Streng said. As a long time supporter of Alternatives in Motion, Streng knew the organization could help grant this wish. Alternatives in Motion worked with Carelinc Home Medical to get the wheelchair sized and fit for Oksana and surprised her at school on the day of her 10<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"Without the generous support from the Streng family it would have been very difficult to grant this wish," said Alternatives in Motion's Founder Johnnie Tuitel. "I am honored to have the Streng family as part of the Alternatives in Motion team. Today they chose to make a wonderful difference in a little girl's world," Tuitel said.



Oksana takes a second at her birthday party to smile for the camera.

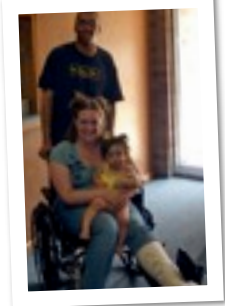
## *Charity of the Year*

We would like to thank the Michigan Association of Student Councils and the Michigan Association of Honor Societies for all of their hard work in raising money for Alternatives in Motion

during the 2007-2008 school year. 60 Michigan high schools participated in a wide variety of fundraising events that helped raise over \$58,000 for Alternatives in Motion.

Thank you for helping us give the gift of mobility!





"It is a unique experience to roll down the street in my scooter during one of the many festivals and meet people from so many cultures."

## *A Note From Carol:*

I have Multiple Sclerosis, Fibromyalgia, and Rheumatoid Arthritis. I use a scooter provided by Alternatives in Motion for longer trips to places like the grocery store, library, park, movie theatre, museums, and more. The scooter helps to conserve my limited energy and allows me to continue participating in the lives of my children and the activities in my community.

I am a Practice Manager for a small family practice medical office in Troy. I work in a very small, multi-level office where my scooter is not practical. My new service dog Tortilla will help me navigate between the two levels, carry items to other staff members, pick up items I drop, and get help if I fall. I recently took my scooter to Washington, Kansas to train for Tortilla's arrival into my life. It was wonderful! I was able to stay in the motel down the street from the training center and use the scooter to get back and forth to daily training.

With the help of my assistance dog and my scooter, I know my energy level will soon increase and I will be able to get out more. I'm looking forward to taking Tortilla to the Detroit Science Center, The Detroit Institute of Art, The Troy Historical Village, and attending an occasional play or concert at the Meadowbrook Open Air Theater. My

scooter will make the outside world more accessible for both of us. Thank you, Alternatives in Motion for your priceless gift!

## *A Prayer Answered:*

At one point in time Carol was faced with some difficult mobility issues. She did not have the funding to help herself obtain a new wheelchair and was ordered by her doctor to stop walking. She didn't know what to do until she visited with Major Lanham from her local Salvation Army. Major Lanham told Carol to put her trust in God. They held a prayer service one Sunday afternoon and on Monday morning Alternatives in Motion received a call from an individual selling a chair in Carol's town.

Through the local police chief we were connected with Carol and answered her prayers just a few days later. The chief delivered the wheelchair to Carol and worked closely with staff from the Salvation Army to build a ramp to get the chair into her house. A recent letter from the police chief said, "I wanted to let you know that Carol was smiling a big old grin for the first time in a long time and you are a huge part of her smile. You should feel comforted knowing the Lord worked his magic through you and the rest of us."



Carol and Major Lanham pose for a picture in her new power wheelchair.



## Special Events Update:

### *“What’s Your Handicap?” Golf Classic*

Golfers of all skill levels are invited to join us on Monday August 11, 2008 for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual “What’s Your Handicap?” Golf Classic. This four person scramble will begin with a shotgun start at 1:00p.m. at Thousand Oaks Golf Club in Grand Rapids, MI. The event is \$125 per person.

After a day on the course we welcome all golfers and their guests to join us for a special dinner presentation, silent auction, and our live raffle drawing. Some of this year’s raffle prizes include a weekend condo rental on Lake Cadillac, a private tour and wine tasting for 6-12 people at Bry’s Estate Vineyard & Winery in Traverse City, and a golf package to Crystal Mountain Resort.

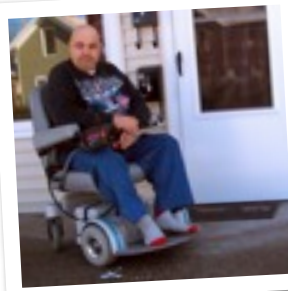
We would like to say thank you to the following sponsors who have contributed to this event so far: Agility Health, Invacare Great Lakes Shipping Company, H & S Companies, L & D Adhesives, and Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital. There are still several sponsorship opportunities available to meet any budget. To register your foursome or secure your sponsorship, please call Matt Chapman at 616-493-2620. Please register no later than Wednesday August 6, 2008. Individual players are encouraged to sign up and will be paired with other players accordingly. We look forward to seeing you on the golf course!

### *2008 Wheel Run Together*

Once again students from the Grand Valley State University’s Physical Therapy program did a fantastic job planning and organizing this fine spring event. This year race organizers were faced with the challenge of adding a 10k route to the event. They took the challenge head on and planned one of the most successful races to date. The April 5<sup>th</sup> event raised \$4,500 for Alternatives in Motion. 57 people showed up to run the new 10k route and 87 participated in the 5k. The race organizers even managed to plan a beautiful sunny morning, something that has not happened in three years.

The staff and Board of Directors at Alternatives in Motion would like to extend our most sincere thank you to 2008 Race Coordinator Sarah Reese and all of her classmates in the Doctorate of Physical Therapy program at Grand Valley State University. Without Sarah’s leadership and organization we would not have had such an amazing event. Thank you to all of the runners and to everyone involved in the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Wheel Run Together. To see video from this event, log onto [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search: “Wheel Run Together”





## Power Wheelchairs and Scooters Needed

A large part of our success in recent years can be attributed to the donation of new or gently used mobility equipment. Without these donations we simply can not provide the gift of mobility to so many people. Currently we are at an all time low for power wheelchairs and power scooters. We have several individuals on the waiting list in need of such equipment. If you or anyone you know has a new or gently used power wheelchair or scooter they would like to donate, please have them call our office. All donations are tax deductible and we will issue a donation receipt for tax purposes.

Unfortunately we can not take every piece of equipment offered to us as we are not funded to make costly repairs. Here are a few guidelines to consider before donating a wheelchair:

- Equipment must be less than 5-years-old
- Equipment must be in good to excellent condition
- Equipment must be in working order or in need of only minor repairs
- Basic seating elements are preferred

Not sure if your equipment qualifies for donation? Call 616-493-2620 and we will arrange for one of our staff members to evaluate the equipment and determine if it can be used for our mission. Thank you for helping us give the gift of mobility!

## Volunteer Opportunities

- Due to term expirations we currently have open seats on our Board of Directors. Our Board of Directors consists of 15 volunteer members that meet four times a year. If you are interested in learning more about the criteria for serving on the Board of Directors please call George Ranville, our Executive Director, at 616-493-2620.
- On Monday August 11, 2008 is we are in need of volunteers to help at our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual "What's Your Handicap?" Golf Classic. We are looking for volunteers to help cover shifts from 10:00a.m.-7:00p.m. Please email [mchapman@tapshoe.com](mailto:mchapman@tapshoe.com) to sign up for a shift.

### 2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Amanda Schafer, President**  
**Gina Porcaro, Vice President**  
**Johnnie Tuitel, Founder**  
**George Ranville, Ex. Director**

**Dave Allen**  
**Dick Gauthier**  
**Don Kern**  
**Tim Martin**  
**Joe Newhouse**

**Larry Spencer**  
**Jim Van Heest**  
**Andrea Wallace**  
**Bryant Zanko**  
**Cris Zeinstra**

### A.I.M. STAFF

**Matt Chapman:** [mchapman@tapshoe.com](mailto:mchapman@tapshoe.com)  
**George Ranville:** [georan@alternativesinmotion.org](mailto:georan@alternativesinmotion.org)  
**Liz Spieker:** [lspieker@alternativesinmotion.org](mailto:lspieker@alternativesinmotion.org)  
**Johnnie Tuitel:** [jtuitel@alternativesinmotion.org](mailto:jtuitel@alternativesinmotion.org)